1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

kept at his village. Although his lords, and ultimately the Paramount Chief, had rights in the cattle, their day-to-day care was his responsibility and he had in practice the greatest say in their disposal, either for consumption, for payment of bridewealth, or for damages awarded against a member of his segment. He was head of the most clearly demarcated local group and was responsible for it to the heads of superior segments. The village was the cattle-herding unit, but for agricultural tasks it seems probable that in large villages the co-operative unit was the division. Agricultural work was directed, at least so far as women were concerned, by the lady of the division. I have no clear information on how domestic tasks such as cooking were organized within the village but it seems probable that individual women cooked for their husbands and for the children in their care.[18]

Fraser writes of the Ngoni of northern Nyasaland that a village headman had special ritual duties to perform when his village shifted to a new site, and Rattray reports a similar procedure for the southern Ngoni. Wiese mentions an oracular method of selecting a new village site among the Fort Jameson Ngoni, but is silent on whether or not the headman had a special role to play.[19] I could gain no information from my own informants about former practices, but nowadays the headman has no specific ritual to perform when a village shifts.

There is little evidence about the number of villages in the Ngoni State. There are a few conflicting observations on population and size and number of villages in the Fort Jameson group at the time of the conquest,[20] and we have estimates for the population of different groups in recent years, but estimates of the population and number of villages at earlier dates are all highly speculative.

The term for lieutenant, *nduna*, was used at all levels in the residential system and was applied even to men who had not yet founded their own segments. As already mentioned, a lieutenant was a quasi-related dependant, not a kinsman, of his lord who was selected to be in charge of a section of his lord's dependants and to carry out the instructions of his lord. Some of my informants referred to a ceremony [illegible] which a new office of lieutenant was created and a feather placed in the hair of the newly appointed man, but others appeared not to have heard of this custom. The

[18] Barnes, *Marriage*, pp. 15*f*. For the Ngoni of southern Nyasaland, see Read, 'Standards', p. 16.

[19] Fraser, *Primitive people*, pp. 203*ff*; Rattray, *Folk-lore stories*, pp. 36*ff*, 109*ff*, 196*ff*; Wiese, 'Geschichte', p. 199. In his 'Expedição', p. 480, Wiese associates this method only with a change of residence by the Paramount Chief.

[20] See pp. 103*f*.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

769 In another part of the cult cattle played a still more direct part. When
825 a diviner advised that prayer should be made to the spirit of a leading
787 man on behalf of someone of his clan who was sick, the man who was in charge of the *gogo* section of the village informed the head of the clan or *banja* and they agreed to address the spirits, and to offer a sacrifice if the spirits were willing. The sign of willingness on the part of the spirits was for the selected beast, when it had been driven out of the kraal, to urinate or make dung. If either happened they said the spirit was willing, and arranged a time for the prayer and sacrifice. If neither happened, if the beast just stood still or lay down, the spirits had 'refused' and the sacrifice could not go forward. This sign or lack of sign by the beast could not be ignored, and was a further illustration that the Ngoni considered cattle to be essential as a medium of approach to the spirits of their ancestors.

When the beast 'refused', those responsible called the diviner again and asked for an explanation. He produced a reason and advised them to try again, and the process was repeated until the sign of agreement was given. There was always anxiety when the beast 'refused', partly because of the delay in sacrificing and partly owing to an uneasy feeling that they had left something undone and the ancestral spirit was not pleased with them.

The main part of the ritual of sacrifice to an ancestral spirit was killing the beast, offering the meat to the spirits and the eating of the meat by the principal persons concerned. This we shall examine more closely in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER III

THE ROLE OF THE DIVINER IN THE ANCESTOR CULT

791 It has been apparent in the chapters on the Paramount and on warfare
769 in Part II, and in the two previous chapters of Part IV, that divining by an accredited person was a necessary preliminary for sacrificing to and addressing the ancestors.[1] I never heard or received any account of the ancestor cult in which divining was not specifically mentioned as the first step in the performance of the ritual. Moreover, all the diviners of good standing were themselves operating because they had contact with and were possessed by the spirit of an ancestor. By virtue of this direct contact with the spirit world the diviners claimed their special powers.

[1] The one possible exception was the first-fruits ceremony, but this had been given up before the Ngoni settled in Nyasaland, and the old men had no clear memories of the ritual followed.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

an *isanusi* today". When he entered the place of his sister, NaNdumbu, he was dreaming. If there was a war he could say "You must not go to that war because all the people will be killed." He was just dreaming and dancing his *isanusi* dance. When he danced that dance on the chief's *bwalo* the people praised him with special praises.'

Two informants remembered fragments of the songs sung by NaNdumbu and her brother, and these songs were also sung by the old *isanusi* in the northern kingdom. I give here the Ngoni versions with an English translation, omitting the repetition of lines and the 'sounds' which accompanied the singing:

Uyezwa mihlolo	Do you see the omens?
Inkanyezo ipuma	The star comes out,
Ipuma yanga	It comes out in the East.
. . . . .	. . . . .
Ubaba uyangibiza	My father is calling me.
Hamba ekaya	Go home.
Indaba zikuyandela	Things have turned against you,
Hamba ekaya	Go home.

Although these diviners acted at times on their own initiative, this did not prevent their being called on in time of crisis to diagnose the reason for disaster or sickness. *Izanusi* who used their own medicines to smell could prophesy and speak on their own initiative as well as waiting to be called on. These medicines were said to induce the dreams on which the prophecy was based, and they were generally contained in the tail of a gnu or in a sheep's horn, or some other horn.

Below this category of the prophets, whether *abantu benhloko* or *izanusi*, came those who used lots when called on to diagnose a particular situation. These were often men who dreamed, or who used their own medicines to receive messages from their ancestral spirits, but instead of announcing their message directly, they brought with them some form of lots which they used when they were consulted, and gave their diagnosis as a result of observing the lots. Sometimes they sang their own songs, accompanied by dancing, which led to an almost trance-like condition; sometimes they used their lots without any previous working up of an emotional state through song or dance. I never met any of the dreamer type of prophet who used no medicines and no lots. There was general agreement among the Ngoni that they had died out, that their main service had been in times of war, and that the number of men or women who possessed such powers had, even in the past, been very small indeed. I did, however, see one diviner at work who used the song and dance technique with the lots, and two who used the lots without song or dance.

The *isanusi* whom I saw in the northern kingdom was divining for sickness at the request of a party of people who had come to consult him

about a sick relative. He asked for a preliminary payment in cash from me before he would say anything in front of me, having already received the customary present of fowls from the sick man's relatives. There was an atmosphere of part pantomime, part reluctant performance in front of a stranger whose presence seemed to trouble him more than it did his clients. He wore a python-skin cap with beads dangling from it, and carried the tail of a black cow bound with lead and a small skin bag with the lots in it. At first he sat holding the tail in his hands and sniffing it occasionally. Then he suddenly shook the lots out of the bag—six large beans called *kulumo* and about twenty small round nuts called *mapi*. He put snuff on the top of each bean, sprinkled snuff on the nuts, picked the nuts up in both hands, shook his hands together and threw the nuts on the ground. Some fell near the big beans, others rolled between them. He looked intently at them, then at the group waiting to consult him. 'There is someone who is sick,' he said to them and the group replied '*Siyavuma*' (we agree). They continued to chant *siyavuma* in a low tone over and over again, with an almost mesmeric effect. He meantime went on to describe the sickness, that it was a pain inside the man (the chanting was loud), that it had been on the right side (less response), in the stomach (less response), on the left side (loud response). At intervals he waved the tail in the air and knocked the leaded end on the ground to emphasize the louder response. He did not specify the complaint but advised the people consulting him to go home and kill a goat as a sacrifice to their ancestors, and give the sick man some medicines which he would sell them.

It may have been the mixture of a real consultation with my visit which produced his slightly mountebank performance, and it may also have been his combination of the role of diviner with peddling medicines which the people present for the consultation evidently expected to obtain from him. This aspect of his performance impressed itself on the Ngoni informant who was with me. He was slightly contemptuous throughout, even when the songs were being sung and taken down. He kept on muttering 'This is Nsenga,' and said afterwards as we were going away that this diviner worked only for ordinary people and their sickness, as witnessed by his telling them to sacrifice a goat, and that he would not have been acknowledged by the real Ngoni. He was making comparisons all the time between the 'people of the head' and the diviners of this type, illustrating the Ngoni esteem for the real dreamers, and the slight, sometimes great, contempt for those who combined divining with recommending medicines as remedies.

The contrast between the performance of this diviner and that of the two *izanusi* whom I saw at work in the central kingdom was considerable. My long residence in Mcakhatha and the entrée I had to all that was taking place in connexion with the sickness of Bambo Manga no doubt helped to give confidence to the diviners. The chief and his

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

123 brother arranged for first one *isanusi* and then, when he became ill, for another to come and see me. In each case they concluded that I was 791 consulting them and foretold what would happen and gave me advice, warning and assurance. There was great seriousness of purpose and no mountebank atmosphere, even though they came to the courtyard of my hut and saw round them all the paraphernalia of a European's camping equipment.

791 The first diviner, who was of a Venda clan, was a very old man and greatly respected and trusted by the Nzunga clan, who were looking after Bambo Manga in Mcakhatha and who had called him several times to divine for them during her illness. His story was that he was the son of an *isanusi* and when the signs of his initiation began to appear before he reached puberty, his father recognized the fainting and the pain and refusal to eat, and said 'This child will be a diviner also.' The spirit who came to him in dreams was his father's father who had died south of the Zambesi, where his father had been born.

This man was very definite about the kind of situations for which he could and would divine and the type of advice he would give. Questioned further on this point, he gave in this order: sickness, journeys, auspicious days for holding an *ngoma* dance or a hunt, 'absent treatment' of relatives in trouble in the south asked for by letter, sickness of cattle, moving a village to a new site. He refused contemptuously any divining about stealing or death, or agricultural practices such as choosing new gardens or beginning cultivation. Neither he nor the people with him made any specific reference to the different roles of an *isanusi* among the Ngoni and the local Cewa and other tribes, but since they used the same terms for divining, *kuombeza mauta* (to throw the lots), they were careful to point out what the Ngoni diviners did *not* do. In the case of sickness due [755] to 'spirits troubling', of auspicious days for journeys and other events, of cattle sickness, of moving villages, his invariable advice was to sacrifice a beast to the spirits. Most of the inquiries addressed to him were about sickness. When such an inquiry came to him in his village, he smelled his medicines and asked of *his* ancestral spirit 'Is the man likely to live or not? Who is troubling him? What shall he do?'

● 787 The first occasion on which I saw him divine was in the hut of a 791 widow of the former chief, Njolomole I, which had been newly swept and a new fire made. The chief and his uncle sat on either side of the fire, the diviner on the right-hand side of the door and I on the left on the woman's side. The diviner was told to begin. He pulled out his *stibo*, the stem of a gourd, which was wrapped in bark and cloth and had inside it the medicine, and which was waxed at each end. He scraped bits of the *suiba* root into a pot with a little water in it. He put the *stibo* in the water for a moment and then took it out and rubbed it in his hands. He put it under a flat food basket and swept his hand over the top of the basket once or twice before putting the pot on top. He gazed

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

into the pot, which he kept turning with his right hand, and he murmured in a low voice from time to time, and shook his head. The only words which were audible were '*Inu tamverani*', 'You, please listen.' After three minutes he tried to lift the pot, but it seemed to stick to the basket. All this time he was very calm and unexcited, though the pot appeared to stick every time. Finally he said the spirits of the Maseko chiefs were not willing for a sacrifice to be made. The reason, he said, was that I was there and they were afraid of a white face, because the Europeans had killed Gomani I and the spirits 'were ashamed' before white people. The following day the lots were tried again when I was not present and the spirits gave the diviner the sign that they agreed to the sacrifice.

About three weeks later, at the suggestion of the head of the *gogo* house in the village, he came to see me, having been asked to tell me about his initiation. He treated the call as a genuine summons to a consultation, however, and performed for me the ritual I had seen him carry out in the hut. This time he consulted the spirits of his father and grandfather. I had made no specific inquiry of him, but he asked his spirits for advice about my movements, whether I should go or stay, addressing them with '*Tamverani*', 'Please listen.' The pot came off the basket after the second effort and he looked at the bits of *nsika* root as they floated inside. Then he looked up at me and said 'You must not leave here. Perhaps you were thinking of returning to the Paramount's village. You should not do this because my spirits tell me that the spirits here want you to stay.'

When this old diviner became ill, another one of an Ntumba clan was called to Mcakhatha to divine about the illness of one of the leading women. His father had also been a diviner, a dreamer who did not dance or throw lots for sickness, but told of things to come, especially about war. His father had been in the Tengo country in Songea with Mputa and had spoken Ngoni there, and the spirit of his father's father was the one who came to him at his initiation as a young man. His equipment and technique were slightly different from those of the former diviner. He had a small duiker horn which had medicine inside it of the *ciswambalame* tree roots and, like the *ntibo*, was waxed at the end and rounded so that it could swivel on its base. At first he smelled the horn and made deep belching noises, almost like retching. He put the horn in an empty gourd cup, waxed end down, and left it by his left thigh. Out of a skin bag he took ten small half-shells of nuts, four large and six small, which he said he got from the Venda people. They were called *zihlobo*. He arranged them face down in front of him, the larger ones in the middle. He gathered them up again, smelled them, belched and threw them down. Five fell face down and five face up. He picked them up and threw them five times until they fell in the position he wanted, muttering as he did so '*ai, ai*' (no, no), and finally '*akondwera*' (they are happy).

He left the shells, picked up a small rattle, a little gourd with stones in it, and knocked it on his knees. Meantime he picked up the gourd with the horn in it, and held it on the palm of his left hand with the base resting on his extended fingers. The horn rocked on its base inside the gourd and came to rest, touching one edge of the gourd or another and sometimes standing erect without touching the rim of the gourd. During this part he was much disturbed and sweat ran down his face while he murmured to his spirits '*Nanga inu*' (What are you doing?), '*Mubodza ndithu*' (You are surely lying), '*Ai ai ndithudi*' (No, no truly). Finally the horn came to rest against the rim of the gourd towards him, and he put it down, and wiped his forehead. Then he said to me 'You will be ill, but you will recover. You will not die in this country. So do not fear. You will not die'.[1]

During the rocking of the horn in the gourd the diviner was listening to and speaking to his spirits. His obvious distress at first, and his subsequent relief were genuine and onlookers said that with this man such swaying of fortunes, through appeal to his spirits, often took place. He was considered a very powerful diviner, in that he could argue with the spirits and did not depend only on what the lots said or take them as the final word. His combination of the use of the medicated horn with the throwing of lots was considered a sign of power. He said himself that he always knew the day before when a man was coming to consult him about someone who was ill and that night he dreamed and his spirits told him what to say.

Several references have been made to the initiation of a diviner, which was an essential preparation for his role, and an experience which marked him out as different from other men. Both the diviners whom I saw at work in the central kingdom gave short accounts of what happened before they became diviners. In the first (*a*) that of the very old man, most emphasis was laid on the finding and preparing of the medicines. In the second (*b*) the emphasis was on the re-birth element of the initiation, denoted by the expression *ukutwasa* which was used for the reappearance of the new moon after the period of darkness.

¶ (*a*) When I began to divine I slept, and in the night I dreamed dreams, and they said go and fetch a tree, its name is *nsiku*, and when you have done so take the handle of a gourd and put some of the *nsiku* inside, and shut each end of the handle with wax and on the wax put beads. Find a pot and pour water in it and put in pieces of *nsiku* bark. Take that handle and put it on the ground and cover it with an *nsungwa* and put the pot on top and what you say will be true.

They told me just to go anywhere to find that tree. These dreams came to me when I was a young man. After these dreams I was very ill, near to death, and another thing I had pains in my heart; and my mother and my father thought I was dead.

[1] This prophecy was remembered by the people and often quoted when two weeks later I was attacked by a swarm of wild bees and nearly died.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

that she intends to seek divorce if he does not reply. If the address of the migrant labourer is unknown to his relatives or to his wife, the court endeavours to trace him through the Administration.

Thus the husband's kin usually try to prove in court that the woman is seeking divorce because she has another husband in view, and sometimes imply that she has been committing adultery with him. I heard one man oppose the plea for divorce presented by the wife of an absent kinsman by saying that he was sure the woman had been committing adultery but that he had been unable to catch her in the act. Let the court postpone the case until he had good evidence and then he would agree to the plea. The husband's relatives are more certain of £3 damages if they can prove adultery, and the money is paid to them on behalf of the absent man. For her part the woman usually denies that she has any thought of remarriage. She arrives in court in her oldest and shabbiest clothes, to demonstrate both her husband's failure to clothe her and her own lack of desire to attract other men.

The general principle that no court action involving the husband's sexual rights can be taken without his consent applies even to cases of incest. It may be well known that a woman is living incestuously with, say, her father, but the husband's relatives cannot take her to court without the permission of the husband. Many husbands, on hearing from their relatives that their wives are committing adultery or are pregnant by other men, prefer to let the matter stand over until their return to the village which may be several years hence. Thus one woman may have been sleeping with her father for many years, and another have a growing brood of adulterine children, before at last they are brought to court by their returned husbands.

Even when a man and his wife are both living in the towns, their relatives may be called upon to settle differences between them. In one instance that came to my notice, a man and his wife both from the same village were living together in Lusaka. The woman had a still-birth and her husband went to a diviner to discover who was responsible for this. He was told by the diviner that his wife had been bewitched by his father's brother's son, who was also in Lusaka. The man wrote home to the village to complain. A meeting was held attended by important people in the village, and it was decided to write back and tell the two men that they must not be so foolish as to quarrel in this way. Not all men who go away remain in such close touch with the village but there is a great deal of correspondence back and forth, and this is augmented by the news brought by friends who come home. The intervention in a marital quarrel in the towns is one aspect of the way in which the field of social relations held in common by rural villagers stretches out to include kinsmen and former neighbours working many hundreds of miles away. Men who fall sick in Southern Rhodesia are fetched and escorted home, fathers go on holiday to visit their

6:Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

III. Then they spread a mat and go and bring her husband, and set them down on the mat side by side and begin to shave his head. As the hair falls the people throw down beads. Then they take a stick and lay it across the legs of the man and woman so that each may know it is that stick that will beat them [if they do wrong]. When they have finished shaving the man, they bring oil and rub the bodies of the man and woman. When it is dark the old women escort the girl to her husband's hut. The *ndiwo* relish is cooking on the fire. During the night the woman rises and puts some salt in the pot. Next morning, before dawn, before the villagers have opened their doors, the woman goes off, and gives some of the relish to her mother, and to the old woman who was mistress of the ceremony. This relish she just sets down at the door, and when they open they find it, and rub it on their feet and under their arm-pits; little children just eat it. If she have any relations who are at a distance, they sharpen a little piece of bamboo and stick the relish on the end (and put it aside) that the distant one, when he returns, shall also rub his feet with it. Perhaps the absent one, should he not have heard that these events have happened when he comes to the village, and should say, "Give me water that I may drink," they refuse him, but with a purpose, even though the water is there, and go and bring the relish that first he may rub some on his feet. It may be the woman discovers that her husband is impotent, then she just stays in her hut and does not come forth to distribute the relish. Then the old women [who know the reason] will persuade the man, saying, "Go off to the man with the lots to consult them" [to see what is to be done]. When he goes off (on this errand) some other man is called in, and he

6:Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

XXVI

THE KANONOMERA DANCE

If a person is ill, they go and consult the lots, and then he of the lots says, "It is the spirit of his grandmother, it is wanting a dance; when you dance that dance, you can take it from us the child is sitting up." And they go to the village and take a basket of grain, and with it they address the spirit, saying, "There is the grain for which you are killing a person; when we have made beer, let us see the person (who is ill) sitting up." And then they assemble every one, and the day the beer is strained, they all come together, and that evening they enter the hut (where the sick person is), and begin to clap their hands to rouse the spirit, and then they see the sick one is trembling and crying out, and then the people say (to the spirit), "You must not come with war, it is we who have called you; see here at the village the drums have come, but let them depart again without anything happening to mar the dance." And when they have finished clapping their hands the dance comes forth, and the drums begin to sound, and they are dancing. He who remembers a song sings it; when one is possessed by a spirit, down he falls, and they drag him out of the dance, and deck him with calico and skins of animals, and he again enters the circle and dances. When a person is possessed by a child's spirit, they bind his calico tightly round him that it be strong, because that person is wishing to strip it off, and dance naked, as a child does not wear anything. Should a woman be seized by a man's spirit, saying, "I am so and so," they deck her with a

6:Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

535
755 feather head-dress, and in her hand she holds a little
782 stick (for a spear), and her calico is tied round her
787 waist, and her breasts swing free. The songs they sing at the Kanonomera dance go thus—

533 What knocks off the dew,
755 Comes at the early dawn.—(*Repeat.*)
539

Looking, gazing, we just gaze one at the other.
(*Repeat.*)

When the drum sounds it is the *choinjoli* drum that brings the spirit.—(*Repeat.*)

Far away there, far away,
Far away there, far away,
Far away where shines white that little cloud,
Far away there, is my bow.

Little quail, little quail, you are picking up the little grains.
And what if he is,
Are they not his eyes?
It broke his leg for him;
Only hunger, only hunger.

Oh no, indeed, indeed,
Two wives have been too many for him indeed;
Two wives have been too many for him indeed.

You hate me,
You hate me for my being so old.—(*Repeat.*)

13:Fraser M-5 (ca. 1890) 1901
FR5 Ngoni FR5

their anger and propitiate them. Yet this recognition is not made in any degree of affection but in the times of dark necessity. When the rain has not fallen, when locusts swarm and eat up their crops, when sickness and death are abroad in the village, the spirits are working out their vengeance for being neglected. Then they are remembered and sacrifice is made. There are also certain ceremonial observances on important occasions. Before the gardens are hoed, and when the reaping time draws near; if an army is going out to battle, or when a coronation takes place, then prayer is made. The confusion of the old and new ideas was amusingly illustrated at the last coronation ceremony, when Mperembe, the eldest sub-chief, sacrificed a bull, and offering it to the spirit of the dead chief prayed him to bless the new chief, then added, "and, O Mombera, bless the teachers when they go about teaching the people the words of God." There was something very beautiful in this recognition of Christianity as but a fuller shining of the dim light they had.

Their old men are full of stories and traditions, some of them are uncommonly like the stories of Uncle Remus, and others with a curious echo of Old Testament story. There is a hill near Ekwendeni, where tradition says a great tower was built by the Tumbuka to reach into the moon. But the white ants ate away the foundation and the tower fell and the people were killed. I passed below this hill when I was on my way home, and chaffed my carriers on trying to build so great a tower with wood. They laughed, and said, "But do you know the story of the hill over there?" pointing to the north. No, I said, what is it? And they told me how that long ago the Tumbuka found the country too narrow, so they decided to climb into heaven and cultivate new gardens there. So they gathered the nation together and cut down all the trees, and began to build a huge tower on this hill. When they had got a great way up, some cried "Stop, we need build no more. Here is a ladder coming down out of heaven." And they looked up and saw great roots hanging down. So the people caught hold of these roots and began climbing hand over hand up to heaven. But suddenly while they were all climbing, the roots broke, and the nation fell to the earth and was snuffed out.

Like other children of nature there are men and women in the tribe who seem to have a wonderful gift of second sight. Forty years ago a regiment went out on a great raid. The witch doctor in blessing them told them that they would meet a white man

13:Fraser M-5 (ca. 1890)1901
FR5 Ngoni FR5

rising out of the lake, this was the spirit of the fathers returned. Now they had never heard before of men with white skins. But one day when they were burning the Henga villages, suddenly they came on David Livingstone and his party on their first journey of exploration on the Lake. More than once I have heard them tell how this wicked hag had cursed her enemy and said that beneath that tree the lightning would strike her, or some other terrible prediction, and there came a strange fulfilment. Such curious accidents gave to witch-doctors and others a dangerous power over the people. And in spite of their constant failure to bring rain, or ward off sickness and death, their reputation was kept alive by the memory of one or two ancien successes, and by playing on the terrors of the people. Unfortunately these superstitious terrors led to miserable atrocities. The witch-doctor was always called in to detect crime which was not patent. He brought his poison pot with him. He might accuse whom he pleased, and the only way the accused could clear himself was by drinking the poison. If he became sick and vomited then he was innocent. If he died he was guilty. When a chief died his spirit was not allowed to go to the other world alone. A great fight was organised and many were killed, that they might be with him. Or the women and slaves were taken and buried alive with him in the pit.

The twin children and those who cut their upper teeth before their lower, or any who showed any abnormality were buried alive in the sand of the river, or were cast out to the hyenas.

These atrocities are happily becoming matters of history. We seldom now hear of them, and when we do, it sends a thrill of horror through many of the people.

Now a great change is coming over the people. They are the only independent tribe is Central Africa, living under their own chiefs. But the old military days have passed away, and with them much of the great power of the chiefs. The old men see it, and shake their heads, but do nothing to readjust the state. But the young chiefs, most of whom are readers and Christians, have set themselves energetically to try and remould their government. Our most capable and powerful sub-chief, who is himself an elder of the church has recently established a regular hut tax, and has formed a police force. His police bring criminals to justice, enforce his judgments, prohibit the people from cutting down trees, and during slack seasons go through the villages, and where